

Event Brings Leaders to Local Schools as Guest Teachers

MINNEAPOLIS, April 8, 2010-Three of the state's U.S. representatives highlighted the importance of hard work and determination to local students while serving as guest teachers during Teach For America Week, which concluded today. Congressman Keith Ellison, D-5th District, addressed students of English as a second language at Wellstone International High School; Congressman Erik Paulsen, R-3rd District, taught a lesson to seventh grade English students at Brooklyn Center High School; and Congresswoman Betty McCollum, D-4th District, engaged with kindergarten and fourth grade students at College Prep Elementary in St. Paul.

Teach For America recruits, trains, and supports top college graduates who commit to teach for two years in urban and rural public schools. Teach For America Week draws community leaders nationwide to support educational excellence for all children. These volunteers visit the classrooms of Teach For America teachers, also known as corps members, and teach lessons based on their experience in business, politics, and beyond. An annual event since 1997, Teach For America Week will take place in 30 regions, including the Twin Cities, throughout 2010.

"It was a great honor to participate in Teach For America Week and see this program in action in the 3rd District. Educating our children is critically important to the future of our communities, state, and nation, and I enjoyed speaking to the students and educators at Brooklyn Center High School who are working to build a better future every day," Congressman Paulsen said.

"Providing every child a quality education is a great investment in Minnesota's future. To make that possible, we need effective, passionate teachers," Congresswoman McCollum said. "Teach For America has been placing great teachers in classrooms where their skills are needed the most. There is no doubt that Teach For America corps members are making a positive impact on our schools and on the lives of the students they teach."

Teach For America's network includes 7,300 corps members teaching in 35 regions and a national force of 17,000 alumni at the forefront of efforts to end educational inequity.

"Teach For America is grateful for the support of these congressional leaders and excited to invite them into the classrooms of our corps members," said Daniel Sellers, executive director of Teach For America in the Twin Cities. "I appreciate their commitment to ensuring that the most effective teachers are reaching students in our most challenging schools so that all Minnesota students receive a world-class education."

During Teach For America's charter year in the Twin Cities, 42 corps members are reaching approximately 2,500 students in under-resourced schools, while some 170 alumni are working from every sector to level the playing field for students and families in low-income communities.

Teach For America received a record-setting number of applications for the 2010 corps, including nearly 900 from across Minnesota. More than 46,000 individuals applied in total, marking the third consecutive year that application numbers increased by more than 30 percent. More than 1 in 5 of these applicants majored or minored in mathematics, science, engineering, or finance, subject areas that are typically in high demand among classroom teachers.

A growing body of rigorous research shows that Teach For America corps members are having a positive impact on student achievement and the schools where they teach. A 2008 Urban Institute study updated last year found that corps members have a positive effect on student achievement relative to other teachers, including experienced teachers, traditionally prepared teachers, and those fully certified in their field. An earlier study by Mathematica Policy Research found that students of corps members make 10 percent more progress in a year in math than is typically expected and slightly exceed the normal expectation for progress in reading.

About Teach For America and Teach For America Week

Teach For America is the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates who commit to teach for two years in urban and rural public schools and become lifelong leaders in expanding educational opportunity. Teach For America Week is the annual, nationwide event in which guest teachers engage students from some of our nation's lowest-income communities and inspire them to pursue academic success. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org.

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